

Mayor's Column for the February 15, 2012 Review

In recent months I have been asked several times why I would want to be mayor. The question is a direct reflection of the current political and economic environment. For the days that are difficult and challenging, there are also days that are rewarding and even inspiring. I will share some of the positive events and exciting possibilities for Evansville that occurred in the past couple of weeks.

Baker Manufacturing Company

I was honored to be invited to observe the recent round table discussion held for current and past Baker Manufacturing employees. The day was a reminder for me of the close-knit fabric of our community. Baker's place as an Evansville entrepreneurial enterprise and enduring business, the employee respect for the company, and the close friendships among employees were evident in the shared memories and stories. John Ehle was the convener, and Ruth Ann Montgomery is undertaking the time-consuming transcription of the day's conversations. The transcript is being published in the Review.

Evansville Community Partnership

On January 28 I participated in the ECP strategic planning session. It was a productive, uplifting morning. ECP reviewed its twelve-year history and re-confirmed its mission. A list of projects and tasks was formed for the next couple of years. The impact of ECP on our community has been and continues to be amazing. From its signature annual Fourth of July celebration to serving as fiscal agent for a number of community organizations, ECP continues to grow our connectedness.

One new initiative for this year is to provide organizational mentoring and administrative support for the launch of an Evansville TimeBank.

TimeBank

TimeBank is a service exchange that will help us become better neighbors, improve our quality of life, and grow community spirit. It works like this: for every hour of service you give as a TimeBank member, you earn one TimeBank hour, which you can trade for services offered by other members.

Here are a couple of examples that might happen in Evansville:

- Susan grocery shops for Evelyn, earning TimeBank hours; Susan spends her earned hours on yard-raking by youngsters at the Youth Center; the Youth Center spends their earned TimeBank hours on cookies and treats baked by Evelyn, who earns TimeBank hours.

- Steve drives Rose to regular doctor and hair salon appointments; Steve spends his earned hours on dog-walking service by Ann; Ann spends her earned TimeBank hours on garden weeding service by Tom; Tom spends his earned hours on business mentoring services from Rose, a retired marketing professor, who earns TimeBank hours.
- A local painter paints Pat's bathroom; the painter uses a portion of his earned hours for a dental check-up from a TimeBank member dentist; Pat assists the dentist with assembling and mailing appointment reminders, earning TimeBank hours.

There is a good article on TimeBank initiatives in the February/March 2012 issue of AARP-The Magazine. According to the article, there are about 270 TimeBank programs in the U.S. The author states, "Unlike bartering, which places a cash value on goods and services (and is taxed accordingly), time bank services are considered charitable acts informally traded among members of a group."

TimeBank hours have no monetary value. An hour of baking cookies, stuffing envelopes, or house painting is of equal value. An important feature of the program is that members can donate unused TimeBank hours to other members.

TimeBank programs are particularly valuable to older adults. The community utilizes their hidden talents while providing services that help them stretch scarce retirement dollars.

A local organizing committee is hard at work—watch for further details and information in the coming weeks.

Ice Age Trail

Two weeks ago the National Park Service, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Rock County, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance held a public information session at Creekside Place. Planning is underway to complete the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Rock County. The Rock County Trail will connect with the Kettle Moraine Trail in Walworth County, include Magnolia Bluff County Park, and extend to Albany, where it will connect with the Sugar River Trail. Corridor options were presented at the open house. Two of the four preliminary options include Evansville.

The Ice Age Trail is a National Scenic Trail located entirely within Wisconsin. It is one of only eight National Scenic Trails in the U.S. (The Appalachian Trail is a well-known National Scenic Trail.) When completed, the Ice Age Trail will be about 1,200 miles long. To date, over 600 miles have been completed. The Trail provides mostly off-road hiking and backpacking, with bird watching, magnificent scenery, and wildlife viewing. Some portions of the Trail allow for camping, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling. ATVs are prohibited on the Trail.

The Trail objectives include following glacial features and moraines, preserving natural glacial features, providing support facilities and interpretive opportunities, and offering varied and scenic hiking experiences, including significant archeological, geological, historical, and cultural sites.

The Rock County planning process began in 2006. The information about Evansville used in the development of the corridor options is now outdated. Some updated information was provided at the Creekside meeting and additional material will be submitted shortly. The National Park Service representatives were very interested to know that application has been made to them for listing Leonard Leota Park as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. A copy of the application was supplied to them at the open house. It was also emphasized that there are three current National Register historic districts in Evansville, with more than 300 buildings and structures of historical significance in our community. Our Bird City Wisconsin designation was also of interest to them.

The information about Evansville in the corridor report indicated there were no overnight accommodations available. We now have Cobblestone Inn & Suites in our community. We have numerous options for food and refreshments. The Trail is built and maintained by volunteers. I spoke about the strong volunteer network in our community organizations.

During the Creekside session, a presentation on the geology of our area was given by UW geologist David Mickelson. The Johnstown Moraine runs east-west just north of Evansville. Mickelson described the Evansville Golf Course as an outstanding visual example of the contours of the terminal moraine.

The Park Service is taking public comments until March 15. I encourage citizens to take the time to review the Rock County Alternative Corridors Report. Evansville is part of segment 3 and is included in corridor options C and D. You can make on-line comments at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>. Go to Ice Age National Scenic Trail and find the list of documents open for comment. You can also mail comments to: National Park Service; Ice Age National Scenic Trail; 700 Rayovac Drive, Suite 100; Madison WI 53711.

Following the comment period, a preferred corridor will be identified and a refined plan developed. There will be two additional public open houses as the planning moves forward. Property for the trail will need to be purchased or easements obtained. It is likely to take up to two years to complete the planning process and begin Trail work.

We have great natural assets in the Evansville area, including Gibbs Lake, the Johnstown Moraine, Magnolia Bluff Park, Leonard-Leota Park, and Allen Creek. We value our rich historical resources. We are a community with a strong agricultural tradition; we respect the land and our rural heritage. We have a concentration of Rock County Barn Quilts in the Evansville area. Evansville is the boyhood home and final resting place of renowned American Impressionist Theodore Robinson. Having Evansville located on the Ice Age Trail would be a tremendous amenity for our citizens and would bring visitors to our

community, growing our local economy. Your public input is important to support this terrific opportunity.

Community Announcements

City residents are reminded that the Spring Primary election on February 21, 2012, will be held in the new permanent location at Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street. Polling hours are 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. New state voter ID rules are now in effect.

Mark your calendars for the February 25, 2012, indoor Evansville Farmers Market. The location is Creekside Place, 102 Maple Street from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

E-Arts presents The Evansville Fiddler's Summit at the High School Performing Arts Center at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 25. The ticket cost is your donation the night of the performance.

A Clean Sweep hazardous waste collection will be held at the Evansville Public Works Garage on Friday, April 27, 2012, from 1-4 p.m. Further information on accepted materials and registration will be available in coming weeks.

Community Thanks

Our community thanks the hundreds of citizens that made last weekend's Evansville Fund Chocolate Extravaganza a great success. The auction donors, the successful bidders, the talented bakers, the event volunteers, the Fund Board, and the attendees all provided increasing investment in Evansville.

The Evansville Grove Society, Eager Free Public Library, Evansville School District, and Creekside Place sponsored a birthday party last Sunday afternoon for Abe Lincoln's 203rd birthday. Our community thanks these groups for their collaborative efforts to provide a free family-friendly event.